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WALDO LEE McATEE

MISCELLANEOUS PROSE AND VERSE

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Morning Reveries

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

WALDO LEE MCATEE

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MO 1

Morning Reveries
or
Thoughts While Lying Abed

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That olden school of philosophers, the Thalamosophists,* had no monopoly of knowledge that activity of the mind is enhanced by lying in bed. We may be sure that the easy-going Charles Lamb, for instance, fully appreciated the comforts of bed and the free sway they afford the creative faculties. May we not believe that some of his most delightful essays sprang into being as he whiled away the morning hours, a habit that made him notoriously a late comer at the offices of the East India Company. For a more recent instance, Mark Twain, we know, did as much as possible of his composition in bed. Experience had convinced him of the advantage of the practice.

Now all the Mark Twain stories have not been told. There will be more of them, to the end of time, awaiting inscription on the written page by their fortunate discoverers. Surely there are more of the "Essays of Elia" also, to be found by free-roving

*Which means bed-scholars. Their philosophy was termed Thalamosophy or Thalamology.

minds and put in tangible form for the delectation of readers.

The theory of the present writing is that all the fancies, ideas, plots—call them what you will—conceived by the great creative minds, but unused by them, are still in existence. Consider the host of great writers that have lived and you can imagine what myriads of their untold tales there may be. Created but unrecorded fancies there are without limit. Indeed numerous authors have admitted that inspiration usually outruns execution. Sometimes the theme has remained intangible even to its originator, witness, James Whitcomb Riley's account of dreaming a long poem in which a refrain of exquisite melody occurred. "Awake," he says, "I could not recall a line, and yet I marveled; for somehow this mysterious song was, of course, my own creation, and my brain all unconsciously had fashioned it." (Complete Works, Biogr. Ed. II, 1913, pp. 479–480.)

Where, then, are these poems, plays, and stories? Where, indeed, but in that shadowy realm of the subconscious, which is to the conscious, as is the infinity of space to our known and measured planetary system.

But how and when may these conceptions be grasped? Never better than during the lingering morn, the period when the greatest minds have been most active in creative effort. Then in their daily cycle of existence, these nebulous ideas are nearest

to reality; then they do not fade into intangibility as do most of our day dreams, nor divide into numerous streams of thought, each losing itself in the barren sands of speculation, as do so many of our more conscious efforts. No, at that fair time, their natal hour, they may be detected, understood, and remembered.

Real reverie pertains to the morning; day dreams are things apart. As the veil of slumber slips away, when one is uncertain as yet whether one is asleep or awake, when no exertion of any kind is required, and the body is so comfortable that one is not reminded of its existence, the mind seems detached and free to follow fancy into any realm of thought. Wonderful plans, rapid execution of them, and a joyous feeling of originality intoxicate one.

But despite these sensations, it must be admitted that consciousness is not the clearest and the mind is somewhat bemused. After complete awakening, therefore, in my own case, I usually find it necessary to conclude that the ideas, which seemed so delightfully original, are not so in reality. The tale or verse that has shaped itself in my mind seems not my own. The impression prevails that it has been borrowed, now from this, again from that author.

So I set to work searching for it. I consult my favorite editions and can not find it; but, I reflect, perhaps the collection is not complete. There was one little tale, for instance, which seemed must be one of Guy de Maupassant. However, search failed

to reveal anything just like it; then there came to me the theory here outlined. The story I had dreamed must be one de Maupassant had planned but had never written—a floating fragment—which my subconscious mind has seized upon and had been able to transfer to my conscious memory, so that I was able to reproduce it. Whether or not you agree with my theory, here is the story:

A GOOD GIRL

She had worked in my office for years. She was a good, sensible girl and faithful in her work. To show my appreciation, I was as kind to her as wholehearted interest and thoughtfulness could make me. My wife frequently sent her little gifts, and I added others on my own part. She was sincerely grateful.

Every morning when I reached the office she was there ahead. Our daily greeting was cordiality itself. We had known each other so long and so well that it would have been surprising if a note of affection had not crept into our intercourse.

One day I brought a gift which particularly appealed to her. Her thanks were profuse. In giving it to her our hands touched and seemed magnetically to cling together. Her eyes grew wider and duskier, and a slight flush tinged her cheeks. I was not unaffected by her display of emotion and admiration and affection must have shown in my glance. She leaned toward me, I felt her trembling with excite-

ment; her lips were temptingly near. One moment more and anything might have ensued.

At that instant when hearts were melted and ready to pour into one another through the medium of passionate kisses, with the promise of all the soul could wish in those glowing eyes before me, I deliberately closed mine. The circuit was broken, our hands parted, and with a little shiver, an "Ooh" of relief and an "Oh" of disappointment, she said, "That was a narrow escape, was it not?"

Long since, apparently, the incident has been forgotten. She still works for me and we are the best of friends, which proves the superfluity of my first remark that she is a very sensible girl.

From de Maupassant to our beloved American poet, James Whitcomb Riley, seems a far stride, yet to the wholly detached mind, nothing is impossible. So there came to my bed one morning a poem, which seems very like those of the Hoosier bard, yet not a duplicate of any of them so far as I can learn. If any reader should find it so, I shall be pleased to receive the information; such a coincidence would constitute a most remarkable case of the phenomenon of thought transference.

OLE BOSS NICKLES' BLACKSMITH SHOP

What fun we had 'ith ole Boss Nickles!
The thot of it my memory tickles.
Most any game, the boys 'ud stop,
To visit his ole blacksmith shop.

Ho! whang! how the iron did clang!
And sparks flew by us as it rang.
He'd bend it *any* way with ease,
An' pound out horse-shoes, if you please.

When the iron had cooled to ruby red
He'd plunge it in a tub, he sed,
To temper it. My how it hissed!
An' water steamed off in a mist.

An' weldin' things, an' settin' tires,
Gee! 'twas fun! He'd leave his fires
Sometimes, and whittle with his knife
Minnies from hoof scraps, true as life.

Hold one on your palm, 'twould wiggle,
An' was so funny we had to giggle.
My! Boss Nickles was a nice ole man,
I'll be as like him as I can.

Sho! that's long ago, yet is so real,
How olden scenes upon me steal:
The pungent smell of searing hoof,
The sparks upleaping to the roof,
The corners dark, the creaking bellows,
The puffing fire of reds and yellows,
All rise at times to memory's top
And again I'm in Boss Nickles' shop.

The next windfall from the realm of the subconscious, which I would bring to the attention of the reader, is a poem which was classified as to similitude by a friend who read it. "What is this, something from Tennyson?" he enquired. On that hypothesis I have investigated the case but have found nothing definite. But Tennyson, who wrote so much, must also have created a great deal that he did not write —a rich heritage for the explorer of the subconscious world. The theme of these verses seems to be that great contentment is still possible for the nature-lover, even though he be confined to the city. Tennyson lived for some time in London, and it is certain that any reminders of his real love, the country, would have made a great appeal to him.

FROM A CITY WINDOW

To sleep-calmed eyes aware of earliest light,
How welcome ever that familiar sight:
My tree, the red-brown roofs upon the mills,
The low-hung curtain of the distant hills.

The crows, jet-black against the paling sky,
Like rowers strong and fleet go sweeping by.
The pigeons, swiftly wheeling, oft appear,
And sparrows softly chatter notes of cheer.

With joy, therefore, my heart at each dawn teems,
How sweet the world, secure my eyrie seems.
At last I hear, still rapt in mornings' glow,
The rumbling of the hast'ning world below.

When one has a really long morning of sweet doing nothing, a more extended tale may present itself. One not only longer, but different in character from those previously quoted is herewith appended. It is a fairy tale from I know not what source. Most of our fairy stories, in fact, have been so long anonymous that they are classed as folk lore. Like the other fruits of reverie in this offering, it is cast in the first person, for to my mind only that form of composition is adapted to carry a conviction of versimilitude. To grant the initial premise necessary in the case of so many literary efforts, that the teller has intimate knowledge of the character and doings of a number of other persons, for me, is difficult. Let, therefore, one fortunate enough to have seen the fairies tell in his own words,

WHERE JACK FROST GETS HIS FLOWERS

When I was a little boy, my parents, my grandparents, all of our family, in fact, lived together near a beautiful lake. The village was on level ground between the lake and some high rocky hills. I was told, and it was hard for me to understand then, that ages ago the lake had been where our houses stood and that the high hills were its olden shore. They told me also that as the lake lowered, the streams coming in, slowly cut down through the high land and made the deep valleys which we so loved to explore. What a long, long time that must have taken!

In one of the gorges was a high water fall, which kept us from going up that valley. Naturally, we wondered only the more about what was up above, so one day my grandfather and I explored it as far as we could, picking our way along the top of one bluffy bank. Grandpa went ahead and it was sometimes hard for a little boy such as I then was to follow him. There were so many stiff bushes with crooked branches locked together as if they were knees and elbows. It was a rough and wild and lonesome place; I was sure no one had ever been there before.

We looked over the edge of the gorge now and then. It was deep and dark and cold looking but we could hear the stream faintly gurgling far down at the bottom.

A little after noon, by the sun, we made a turn around a great green hill and came upon a wider part of the valley. But the sides were solid rock and so very steep that we could not go down. We were a little tired and sat near the edge to rest.

We had not been sitting long when we noticed some strange objects below us in the shade of the sheer walls of the ravine. They reminded me of the white ant or termite hills of the tropics pictured in my school books. They were like tall haycocks but were glistening white. Here then was something new; we were glad we had explored. We wondered what they were, and as we could not get closer to them, I threw a stone at one to see what would happen. The effect was surprising; the stone went

clear through, leaving a hole ever so much bigger than itself. This I though great fun, so I kept on throwing stones just to see the hillocks crumple, which they did almost as if they were masses of bubbles. Grandpa even tried a few throws and his larger stones made great havoc.

It was soon time for us to turn about for home and we left the snowy haycocks without learning what they were. As we retraced our steps along the brink, we came upon a little path which we had passed unnoticed on our way up. This promised easier walking so we followed it.

We went faster now and soon came to the foot of the great green hill. Here on more level ground, the trail turned sharply away from the gorge and we found ourselves looking in surprise at a little house. It was perfect, but small; you and I could not enter the doors. I knew it belonged to the fairies.

Grandpa stooped and knocked at the front door. It was opened by a neat little lady to whom Grandpa doffed his hat and said, "How do you do?" She did not return his greeting but closed the door with a bang. We were at a loss to understand this seeming impoliteness, so Grandpa knocked again. "I'll ask her for a drink," he said; "she can't refuse that and then maybe we'll get acquainted." But the little lady must have felt cross for she opened the door only a wee bit and snapped at us, "To those who are rude, rudeness will be shown. Good day."

We were astonished but more anxious than ever

to learn something about this small person. So Grandpa knocked once more and without waiting for the door to open said, "We are very thirsty, please won't you give us a drink?" Soon the door opened and two small cups of water were given us. "Thank you so much," Grandpa said, "and may I inquire how we have been rude to you? We are not aware of having done anything wrong; certainly we have not meant to." "But you threw at the stacks," the little lady replied, tearfully; "you almost wrecked them." We were sorry that she felt so badly and Grandpa apologized earnestly. "We did not know they belonged to any one, we didn't even know what they were," he said; "but this is a good lesson not to do anything unless one is sure no harm will result. It was thoughtless, foolish, we are very sorry really. Can't we do something to mend the damage?" The fairy lady relented. "I believe you are sorry and would not have done it had you known, so if you will come with me I'll show you what the stacks are for, then you'll know better next time." She came out of the house and walked around the corner, we following; we soon reached the mouth of a cave. Luckily this was not made by the little people but was a natural cave big enough for even Grandpa to walk in comfortably.

Have you ever been in a cave? One with shining white columns and domes? With great objects like icicles hanging from the ceiling in places, and others, standing up from the floor? This was such a cave

but the fantastic forms were not ice as they appeared, but were pure crystal limestone. I was busy looking at these when we came unexpectedly to a wider part of the cave which stretched out farther than we could see. This, as well as the passage through which we had come, was well lighted; how, we could not tell. All about in this vast room were low but large square tables and the lady taking us to one of them showed us carved in its surface moulds like the fronds of ferns. We went to another and another; one had something like evergreen branches, another grass blades, and so on; there was a multitude of delicate starry or feathery moulds, all very beautiful.

We were delighted and amazed. "And what please are all these?" asked Grandpa, indicating the moulds. "Here," returned our fairy guide, "is where we make the frost flowers. The stacks are our store of raw material and whenever Jack Frost needs a new set of flowers, all the fairy tribe gather here, take the frost and make them for him, fresh and crisp."

Was it not wonderful? We thought so and so told our hostess. Thanking her sincerely, we again begged her pardon for injuring the stacks. She had quite forgiven us now and said, "Don't think any more about that, they can be repaired. The frost we gather where the spray of a waterfall freezes in the cold air of the gorge. It is stacked till we need it. When the weather grows bitter cold and people throughout the land go out of doors but little, Jack Frost comes here and gets the flowers and ferns to

ornament the windows. They must be ready, for Jack is impatient; he wants to do something quickly to make more pleasant your stay indoors when the cold days come."

Be they prose or poetry, the snatching of these fragments out of the ether, as it were, is a most interesting process. It would seem that these literary conceptions go drifting about until they come into contact with a mind that is sensitized to receive them, the case being much the same as with certain vibrations of sound which are audible only to the ear attuned to their frequency.

Now lying in bed is peculiarly adapted to quickening certain faculties and to opening the mind to inspiration; so found the ancient Thalamosophists, who were mentioned at the beginning, so have found many others. It is not surprising, therefore, that while in the exalted state accompanying morning reverie, the intellect is enabled to grasp some of the unspoken creations of genius, which willy-nilly have become part and parcel of the subconscious world.

However gleaned from the great reservoir in which they exist, the ideas that come during lazy mornings are most enjoyable to receive and to record. Such experiences are the greatest pleasures of lying abed. But how the stern necessity of catching that 8:05 car for the office, curtails one's dreams, and robs the world of who can tell what gems of Thalamology.

It is inartistic, beyond a doubt, to destroy illusion in a post-script. But the writer is one who puts frankness above artistry, hence is free to proceed with the dissection. He is the more inclined to the course because previous experience has shown that the Notes on Contents vie in interest to his friends with the contents themselves.

The variety in *mise-en-scene* for collections of stories is small. The telling of tales to divert a monarch is part and parcel of The Thousand and One Nights, tho imitated elsewhere. Boccaccio's device of throwing together a number of people under conditions stimulating them to entertain each other with story-telling, altho as old, again, as the Nights, is thought of in connection with his work before any other and has received the sincerest form of flattery from many pens. Inspiration of the prophets, which might have been used as a welding for much of the material in the Bible, was not worked up as a stage-setting, while a modern invention, the finding of forgotten manuscripts, is both weak and overworked.

An entirely distinct *mise-en-scene*, upon which as a thread can be strung any and all pearls of literature, without doubt, therefore, is one of a class of literary devices, the really distinct types of which can be numbered on the fingers.

That here presented so far as known has not previously been used. Certainly it is comprehensive enough to include the most diverse literary efforts, and it could be worked out in an endless variety of detail. Such manipulation has here been restricted, however, because the writer is content with the invention, leaving others to elaborate it if they choose. Not the *mise-en-scene* but the story is the thing, proof of which is the fact that tales and verses in most classic collections have had no special setting.

Drawing inspiration for literary efforts from the domain of the subconscious occurred to the writer as a *mise-en-scene* while traveling from Indianapolis, Indiana, to Urbana, Illinois, February 16, 1917. Such extension of the theme as here given was written at Madison, Wisconsin, February 25, and at Lansing, Michigan, March 4. The prose and verse compositions included have the following chronology:

A Good Girl.

Conceived Ithaca, New York, February 19, 1914; written Albany, February 22. Entirely imaginary.

Ole Boss Nickles' Blacksmith Shop.

Maywood, Virginia, 1918. Boss Nickles was the name of the kindly old blacksmith whose shop was across the road from the house occupied last by our family in the village of Jalapa, Grant County, Indiana, whence we moved to the city (Marion) when I was five years old.

From a City Window.

Written Washington, D. C., April 27, 1915; conceived there about a month earlier. The trees and the birds were seen, the mills and hills dreamed, from a window in an apartment we occupied at 3306 Fourteenth Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C.

Where Jack Frost Gets His Flowers.

Conceived Washington, D. C., autumn 1913; written Ithaca, New York, February, and Boston, Massachusetts, March, 1914. Imaginary, of course, but my maternal grandfather, Miles Morris, a much appreciated chum of my boyhood, was in my mind when I wrote this tale.

Through the Years

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

WALDO LEE MCATEE

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Waldo Lee McAtee

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1931

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FOREWORD

In the years 1920, 1921, and 1922, the author distributed chiefly as holiday remembrances booklets of original writings. The series was interrupted for various reasons of which only one need be mentioned, that being the purchase and upkeep of a succession of automobiles. There was no lack of material either of verse or prose for additional brochures, and the present will inform readers that the literary flame has never entirely subsided. Writing just for the fun of it is one of the author's greatest pleasures, and he hopes that it will so continue "while the sands of life shall run."

1910

ALVERETTA

So trim and so neat,
So round yet petite,
Is Alveretta;
So pretty and sweet
One almost could eat
Dear Alveretta.

1912

VERSES IN THE ARABIAN MANNER

1.

Her eyes are glowing, slumbering fires,
'Neath wealth of hair like murky night,
Her mouth a ruby set with pearls,
She wins all love by beauty's might.

2.

Slender, but not too slim,
Grace of royal palm outvying,
Rounded, but not too round,
Rondure, beauty's crown supplying.

3.

With graceful, swaying, swimming gait,
Carriage of doe she put to shame,
Sturdy is she, but true femme withal,
A dearling the gods would gladly claim.

1913

EXERCISE IN TROCHAIC DIMETER

Pretty Esther,
Charming creature,
How I love her
Ev'ry feature.

Bright and gladsome
As the morning,
Sweet and winsome,
Earth adorning.

She a treasure
Past the telling,
Bringing pleasure,
Care dispelling.

Roses flow'ring
In her cheeks,
Music showering
When she speaks.

Eyes a-dancing,
Full of fun,
Mien entrancing
Everyone.

1917

IN, NOT OF, THE WORLD

"In, not of, the world," the shallow say
Of him absorbed in learning Nature's lore.
Their world the common flight from voids that bore,
His, life, the earth, and stars in their array.
They have their teas, their plays, and masquerades,
Forgetting is their passion, their delight.
He ponders life, he faces death. The glooms
Of Nature like fair day meet but his steady sight.
The storm, have they it braved, or climbed the peak,
Explored the cave, or traced the rapid river,
Or seen, ten times, the dawn from clouds unfurled?
Themselves indict who without thought thus speak,
Who see not, hear not, never burn nor shiver,
Who to the end are "in, not of, the world."

1920

THE OLD DOORS OF GEORGETOWN

Within a graceful portico, or up a half-turned stair,
In dignity, the old doors of Georgetown wait you there,
Hear an arch by genius shaped, there fretting deftly planned,
Here glist'ning panes or panels neat, and there a knocker grand.

Oh! the old doors of Georgetown,
What a tale that they could tell
Of new, of old, of other days,
They must remember well,
Of colonies, of trading ships,
How war and peace befell,
But best of all of happiness
Where fond hearts calmly dwell.

Wrought with finer fancy these fair doors of other days
When folk took time to think, to live, in deeper, better ways.
Each door beams hospitality, nor does a note omit,
Each is the welcome to a home, by skill and art made fit.

Oh! the old doors of Georgetown,
What a tale that they could tell
Of new, of old, of other days,
They must remember well,
Of colonies, of trading ships,
How war and peace befell,
But best of all of happiness
Where fond hearts calmly dwell.

1922

AS LOVE SHOULD BE

Have we each other but an hour,
    Let us so love
That the hour will seem a life,
In love's glorious appraisement.

And hour on hour piece out a life,
    Let us so love
That the life will seem an hour
In love's glorious summation.

1923

TO LILA LEE

Mistress of our hearts, your art would seem,
Mood to mood flowing, plastic as a stream.
Emotion's every note at your command
You sound them truly all, from faint to grand.
Dear loyalty, sweet tenderness, or deepest
love, you sing,
Lute of the soul art thou, and perfect every
string!

1927

THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING IN THE NORTH

The weary tale of winter days at last is done
And warmer grows the scarce-descending sun.
In lakes the ice, on hills the snow, gives way,
And like a fairy comes the first spring day.

Gold are the furry catkins
that gaily clothe the willows,
Gold are the butterflies that rest
upon these downy pillows,
Gold are the flowers reflecting
the sun's now ardent face,
All to gold, the winter's silver,
has clearly yielded place.

In grassy bowls among the hills
the eager lovers meet
And tell anew the tale tho old
that is of all most sweet.
"Hail sun, and flowers," their spirits cry,
"hail every new born thing,"
"We live, we love," their souls sing out,
"for once again 'tis spring!"

1929

PEACE

[Read lazily, giving the intervals almost as much time as the words.]

Ah laks to pass de day jes' a pattin',
Pattin' mah han'
In de san',
Jes' so.

Foh dey's no one den a bossin' me,
Drivin' me roun',
Lak a houn,
No mo.

Den agin mah haid's a restin' easy,
Wink and blink
Neva think,
What fo?

Sho trouble neva comes when Ah's a pattin',
Pattin' mah han'
In de san,
Lawd, No!

1930

A WOMAN'S LOVE

[To part of the air of "The Beautiful Blue Danube".]

Oh! for a woman's love,
What would I not do?
Oh! for a woman's love,
A love both fond and true.
I'd answer any call,
I'd give my very all,
My life, my soul, for love,
For a woman's love, a woman's love.

Oh! for your true love,
My heart's aflame.
Oh! for your true love,
Have I any claim?
Please show it if its there,
Please tell me if you care,
In ecstacy I'll be,
If you'll give your love to me, to me.

You are my only love,
That dear you know.
You are my only love
I love you so.
I love you all the day,
I love you every way,
I want you for my own,
Want you for mine, and mine alone.

NOTES ON CONTENTS

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ALVERETTA 1

Impromptu on the back of a calling card sent with a gift. New Orleans, La., February 1910. Set down from recollection, this trifle is about as early a scribbling in verse as I have preserved; I have various prose efforts, however, of much earlier dates.

VERSES IN THE ARABIAN MANNER 2

Washington, D. C., March 12, 1912. Inspired by the inevitable fair, and written under the spell induced by copious reading of Sir Richard Burton's translation of "A Thousand Nights and a Night".

EXERCISE IN TROCHAIC DIMETER 3

Maywood, Va., July 1913. Having in mind Constantine Huyghen's versified letter to Tesselschaede.

IN, NOT OF, THE WORLD 4

At the Office, Washington, D. C., July 1, 1917.

THE OLD DOORS OF GEORGETOWN 5

Maywood, Va., December 1920, January 1921. Seeing some of these beautiful old doors made me want to write something about them. They seem to be of that type of architecture which in New England is attributed to exceptional craftsmen from among the ships carpenters.

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As Love Should Be 6

Conceived Bar Harbor, Me., August 1, 1922; written then and in New York City, August 13, 1922.

To Lila Lee 7

Composed on the way home after seeing one of her picture plays. Washington, D. C., January 1923. Written and revised Maywood, Va., January–February 1923.

The First Day of Spring in the North... 8

Written on a train Helsingfors to Abo, Finland, May 4; revised Stockholm, Sweden, May 5, 1927. The bursting gladness of everything at the real advent of spring in this northern clime infected me with this result.

Peace 9

Columbia Pike, beyond Holmes' Run Reservoir, Va., September 12, 1929. After seeing two negro girls lazily reclined by the roadside, I stopped the automobile at the next shade and wrote this.

A Woman's Love 10

Potomac Park, D. C., June 3, 1930, before going to the office. It has always seemed to me that "The Beautiful Blue Danube" in various parts says "a woman's love" and "Oh for a woman's love" over and over again. Half-formed conceptions of many years are here embodied.

A Few Tales

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

WALDO LEE MCATEE

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W. L. McAtee
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A GOOD LISTENER

He had a red-veined, swollen nose flanked by gooseberry eyes, and stubbly cheeks. Altogether unprepossessing, how could anyone ever feel disposed to smile upon him. Yet by his side, busily talking, was a smiling young woman, trim and lively, with a pair of witching eyes. One could not cross their vivacious glances without responding; they were most expressive.

As the train sped along, she talked to him almost incessantly. She smiled, sometimes laughed, but he was stolid. Rarely did he yield even a monosyllable. Usually his eyes were closed; at times he appeared to sleep. How her attentions were wasted upon so lethargic a brute!

Once only he aroused, drew a flask from his pocket, and drank. He then tried to press some of the liquor upon her. The eyes snapped as she refused. Much earnest lecturing followed, but he was unmoved. As he fell into a doze, she dabbed at her eyes.

What leads a woman to consort with such a beast? Can it be the wonderful opportunity for monologues?

COMFORT BEFORE PIETY

It was an intensely hot day. Even when sitting quietly in the little negro church I was visiting, I was covered with perspiration and could feel it gather in little streams and trickle down. The preacher seemed less affected by the oppressive humidity and heat than anyone else in the building. He had already delivered a fairly long sermon, with the alternating intonations (some of them almost detonations), so characteristic of his calling and his color.

When it seemed he might well conclude, especially in view of the uncomfortable conditions prevailing, he apparently found fresh inspiration and launched forth on a new theme. This was too much for a large, not to say voluminous, colored lady who rose near the front of the audience and ponderously began to amble down the aisle.

The preacher was startled. "Samantha Gale," he fairly shouted, "what do you mean, startin' a stampede like dis?" Now there had been no stampede unless Samantha's going could be so considered, she being rather a crowd in herself, but the minister voiced what he feared rather than what he saw. "Considah mah feelin's, Mrs. Gale," he continued; "does yo want to insult yo pastor?"

"No indeedy," returned the bulky Samantha, "ah aint insultin' nobody, but ah's thinking ob mah feelins too. Dis turrible hot day," puffed she, mopping her face, "dese yere numbah lebens, dey's jes killin me." At this remark there broke forth profound sighs, if not groans, especially from the masculine

members of the congregation. Samantha may not have been an orator, but she certainly reached the hearts of her people. "Dis aggravatin' corset," she jerked out, as she grasped the offending article and shook it, "ah wish ah cud tear it off." This also brought a very audible response from the suffering ladies present. Samantha's peroration now came; in fairly desperate tones, she exclaimed: "Ah jes gotter get outer heah and loosen up."

The preacher, not lacking discernment, at once adopted a conciliatory attitude. "Now set down jes a minute, Samantha," he wheedled, "ah knows its hot, an ahm a fool preacher not to see dat dats not de ony trouble. But de good Lawd knows ahs gettin mighty tahd of dis sermon mahself. Now brudders and sisters let us all go foth togedder."

ONE OF OUR MOST TERRIBLE QUARRELS

It was one of those lazy mornings when neither of us could summon enough resolution to get up. My brain cerebrates especially well on such occasions or so at least is my impression. This morning a wonderful thought came to me and I was unwary enough to give it utterance. "Gee, isn't it lucky," I suggested, "that one's head has a skull inside of it?" Coming like a bolt from the blue, it is little wonder this venture provoked her favorite reproof, "Why, Edward, how absurd!" However, as the wife is one of those born good lookers to whom anything resembling mental activity is absurd, I allowed my train of thought to rumble on. "Absurd? of course not. Think how careful we would have to be when scratching our heads, so soft and jelly-like they would be. No doubt some animals would have formed the habit of snapping heads off, just like we do a raisin popping out of a piece of pie, and instead of lions and bears we would call them head-snatchers."

"How perfectly absurd, Edward! Besides, you know I just can't stand such remarks."

"Of course," said I, ignoring the interruption, "there would have to be some protection. The poorer classes probably would wear sections of stove pipe over their heads, with holes cut for seeing, but I think I could afford a helmet for you like those of the knights of old with a long flowing plume at the top. Wouldn't that be nifty?"

"Edward, you mean thing, I believe you want to cover my face up so you won't have

to look at it." This was a telling retort, for I'll say it would be a loss to the world to have that face covered up, so I hastily disclaimed any such desire. "No, no, honey, you misunderstand me; this is only an idea. We'd surely make an exception of you." But still being obsessed with my speculation, I went on, "Of course in certain highly abnormal cases protection would be unnecessary—say when the head was all or nearly all bone."

"Edward!" she shrieked, "now you're insulting me;" and struggling to get up, she vowed, "I'm going right home to mamma."

"No, no, honey," said I, holding on for dear life, "this didn't mean you; not at all. Your head isn't all bone by any means; its got a great big cavity in it." "Let me go! let go," she cried; "I won't stand any more of your insults. This means divorce." "Aw sweetie, be reasonable," I plead. "I meant to say your head has just the right amount of bones and holes" (she was straining to get away then); "no, I mean brains in it" (at that she relaxed a little). "And the dearest little nose," added I, realizing my mental wanderings must stop, and taking a chance by loosening one hand to caress that organ, I raved on, "and cheeks smoother and prettier than any peach, and lips like two rose petals," added I, with the appropriate caress, "just the sweetest and dearest in the world."

Now in a tone both soothed and gratified she replied, "Oh Edward, this is really you," and with a kiss, "dear boy."

It wasn't really me at all, but I had to let it go at that.

A SUPERFLUOUS GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

A constantly repeated phenomenon requires explanation. If there is an accepted one, mental laziness of the average human counsels acquiescence. In the absence of such a pronunciamento even a lazy mind, when sufficiently stimulated, will wonder, why? and wherefore? When, therefore, through the course of the years practically every postal card received was found to be speckled, stained, and nail-marked, august reason straightened on her throne and demanded, "Why is this thus?"

An early theory about the matter was that these cards must be used as a litter in sweeping the floor, for they have about the right combination of dust, smears, blotches, and blurs to result from such usage. The evidences of sprinkling are very patent as the inked letters have spread in spots just as they would if water were violently slatted on them, allowed to spread wheresoever it listed, and then to dry. The effect on the writing is remarkable, and one gets words like Ian, seor, weor, etc., inspiring a craving for ability to read Gaelic. At any rate, if the altered chirography is not Gaelic it is not anything else that the average person can read.

One feature common to most of these maltreated postcards is more or less extensive markings by shoe-nails, of a size somewhat below hob-nails. Usually these constitute a thorough grilling of nail prints through the smudges, breaking the surface of the card much after the manner of machines that are used to prevent alteration of checks. It was

this punching that spoiled our floor-sweeping theory, for manifestly it would be too much work to spread the cards out over the floor before walking on them. It would be so much easier to put them in a box and trample them that this method would inevitably be adopted. If done by a thorough and efficient employe, who is also an accomplished tobacco "chawer" and spitter, the process would give just about the effect we ordinarily note on our postal cards. We do not know the real title of this employe, but in our reveries have dubbed him Official Postal Card Trampler.

AS DIFFERENT AS BLACK AND WHITE

Is it any wonder that these symbols for opposites sometimes lead us to assume great distinctness where perhaps little or none exists? Well, to confess, I, for one, have been so misled.

Black people, white people, so unlike in color; should they not be different in habits, reactions, modes of thought? I wondered whether they might be different in their love-making, whether the dusky temptress might not have other lines for her victim than does her white counterpart.

When, however, I heard one come back at her beau with that ancient wheeze, "Cose its different with a man," I knew they were just the same, black or white.

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Written on a train, Burlington, Vermont, to Boston, Massachusetts, February 26, 1914.

Comfort Before Piety 3
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Maywood, Virginia, April 20, 1924.

A Superfluous Government Official 7
Maywood, Virginia, 1926.

As Different as Black and White 9
Washington, District of Columbia, March 12, 1932.

Medley

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF
WALDO LEE MCATEE

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FOREWORD

This Medley consists in part of free verse, in part of other forms of versification. Free verse, while usually cited as a distinctly modern development, was certainly the medium of Walt Whitman (1855-1892) and in part that of Matthew Arnold (1822-1888). Not mentioned in standard works on versification, free verse has had special vogue in America since 1914 (Amy Lowell). "It discards traditional rhyme, meter, and form in favor of cadence." Thus it is allied to rhythmic prose, a device used by great orators through all recorded time and which, if rhythmic throughout, would be free verse. The author published one example, "As Love Should Be," in 1931 ("Through the Years," p. 6), and now offers five others. In general a note of pessimism seems to prevail but this should not be taken as symptomatic, for in the same period many things of different tenor were written.

THE YOUTHFUL SUICIDE

A pagan I perhaps,
But well I know
The bitter part of life blots out the sweet.
I do not wait for God,
Nor time, nor fate,
But set the hour myself,
Take leave
Before
Vain dreams of happiness,
Make me too weak.

THE GREEN-EYED GIRL

She was called a green-eyed girl,
But her iris held the hue
Of a robin's egg,
Of a turquoise,
Or of an enchanted sea
In which a soul could drown contentedly.

A trick on turning her glance aside,
A lingering flash from half-closed eyes,
Seemed full
Of meaning.
About that meaning
Oft I thought and dreamed despairing.

She has been my wife these twenty years,
That so-called green-eyed girl,
Her half glance,
Full of meaning.
As to that meaning,
Now, as then, I am no nearer learning.

ASAIL

There she goes,
Jauntily,
As trim a craft
As e'er you saw;
She carries a precious cargo—
My heart.
Will she bring it safe to port?
I wonder
And am afraid.

DESOLATION

Space so vast that all it holds seems small,
Air still, coagulated, dead,
Light, intense, of ghastly brilliance,
Heat of an oven, all-pervading.
Yonder the drab canyon wall,
Here the bitter, brazen lake
Like a molten mirror,
On which waterfowl appear
Without a sound,
And from which
As silently they depart,
Pointing the stillness of an empty world.
Then, no life, no motion,
Like doom descends, the stifling embrace
Of unendurable desolation.

THE DESERT AND A MAN

Still, deathly still,
But searing, blinding, radiant,
Like iron heated white.
Arid, breathless, smothering,
A place no man can live.
About him plants mis-shapen
Lift stumpy arms;
Others spectral, seem
Like skeletons unfleshed.
As in a dreamland world,
The man creeps on.
Vastness that imprisons,
And from which
Steps dragging in the muffling sand
Are powerless to escape.
Awhile all seems unreal,
The man still lives.
Anon when he is dead
It will again be real, and
Placid,
Serene,
Content.

UNREQUITED LOVE

Let it rain!
Cruel, biting, stinging drops,
Come break, come pierce, my fevered skin!
Welcome, oh swift, cold pain,
Hard, harder rain,
Sweet counterpoise, assuaging
Inner pain.

Let it blow!
Fierce, cutting, freezing gusts,
Come chill, congeal, my heated cheeks!
Welcome icy bearer of the snow,
Hard, harder blow,
Sweet enemy, distracting
Inner woe.

BLUE EYES

It is always nice to watch the sky
With its fleets of clouds a-drifting by,
But more I like to gaze on high
Seeking a match for my loved one's eye.

Oft midst the clouds is a bit of blue
Like a violet petal blurred with dew;
Thus are your eyes if you only knew
When I tell you my love and you know it's true.

FOGGY BOTTOM

I live among the black men
And find it better so
I walk their street, we nod and speak
No further does it go.

So different from the white men,
They neither ask nor tell,
I live among the black men
And like it very well.

CYPRIPEDIA

Coarse names the plain folk give you
But they don't mean them so.
They deem you as I deem you,
Fair as any flower to blow.
They praise you as I praise you,
Oh! pineland's lovely sprite,
They see you as I see you,
Radiant, fair, and bright.
You do suggest a maiden,
A dryad kneeling nude,
Startled, with blushes laden,
When by her lover woo'd.

SUMMER'S DRUMMER

When flowers of spring have faded,
And we're too dull and jaded,
E'en to cry you mercy, burning summer;
There comes a lusty fellow,
In coat of green and yellow
Who, hot or not, is your official drummer.
When clouds float low and lazy
And heat drives us near crazy
He seems to thrive the best, this doughty hummer,
He *zees* in hills and dales,
He *hums* and runs his scales
And proves to all he is a mighty thrummer.
This player acts his part
With almost perfect art,
He is indeed a fascinating mummer!

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Free Verse

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Maywood, Va., January 24, 1922.

The Green-Eyed Girl 2

Maywood, Va., April 25-27, 1922.

Asail 3

Washington, D. C., May 2, 1929. In an automobile after seeing the girl, skirt flying in the breeze.

Desolation 4

Spokane, Washington, August 10, 1934. Inspired by a visit the day before to Alkali Lake, Grand Coulee, Washington.

The Desert and a Man 5

Washington, D. C., October-November, 1934. Inspiration in part the same as for "Desolation," in part of the sajuaro country (Arizona) seen in June, 1934.

Other Verse

Unrequited Love 6

Maywood, Va., January 22, 1929. After a walk in the wintry wind.

Blue Eyes 7

Valdosta, Ga., March 11, 1929. On a railway siding waiting for another train to pass.

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Washington, D. C., March 27, 1932.

CYPRIPEDIA 9

Washington, D. C., July 1, 1933. Under the generic name of the pink lady's-slipper, I have recorded sentiments inspired by a painting by Sargeant Kendall seen in a San Francisco art gallery in September, 1932, as well as on a previous occasion.

SUMMER'S DRUMMER 10

Washington, D. C., July 1, 1933. The subject is, of course, the cicada, harvest-fly, or dog-day locust.

Vignettes

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

WALDO LEE MCATEE

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PLAYMATES

The sun shone warm on the old wooden steps. There sat a little boy treasuring a bright copper penny. At his side and on other steps, above and below, were milk snakes enjoying the sun. Their colors of yellow, brown and gray were soft and pleasing. They and the boy seemed well content. He stroked them gently on the head and back. They liked it and seemed to enjoy also being held and petted. Every warm day it was the same; they were playmates.

THE FIRST BIRD

Often I was attracted to a wood not far from home. It was not a primeval forest, for cattle browsed in it, and it boasted no great trees. But it had a share of beauty, as has every wood, and it was a safe retreat. The beeches and maples made leafy walls and ceilings, but they were not confining; there was room to feel free, and to see far, and always a comfortable, restful solitude so different from the busy jangle of the town, that it seemed as of another world.

There the mandrake spread its cleft umbrella in the spring and ripened its yellow fruit in summer. On the edges were persimmons and in the wood pawpaws which catered pleasantly to boyish palates. There a ground squirrel scampered gathering beechnuts, which he carried in bulging cheeksful to his burrow.

In the wood one day, there came a bird, never seen before. It was small and neatly gray with black on top of its head. It clambered about on the bark and seemed to go head down just as well as any other way. My attention was fixed, I felt I must know about that upside down bird, its name, and all I could learn. It was the first bird really seen. Ever since, there has been bird after bird to learn, to study, and to love, and a bird world in which solace from care, peace after turmoil, has never been sought in vain.

"So here you are again my little friends. Every evening you come and each time I am glad to see you. Come on to my porch little toads and catch the flies. When all are here, I will let you in the house. I will open the door so you can catch the kitchen flies. Hop in, little bright-eyes, my always welcome guests.

"There, you have done well. I hope you are not as hungry as you were. Perhaps you want to leave now, so I will let you out.

"Oh! the dogs and cats have come, but don't be afraid. Now Bruno and Bing and kitties all, behave! Do not touch, do not worry my little friends. Do not take them in your mouths, for they will burn you. If you bite them you will be sorry. Here you, big, rough Bruno, don't do that!

"Come, little toad, do not cringe so, nothing shall hurt you. There, snuggle in my hands, I will take you to a safe place. Hop away in the soft, cool grass; but come again tomorrow."

THE TORTOISE IN THE GARDEN

Mr. Tortoise, the broken yellow pattern on your glossy carapace hints of mystery, is perchance a magic figure, for not even your brother can have one just like it. And the way you can pull in head, legs, and tail, and, when you are not too fat, close up your shell like a snug house, is certainly a mystery.

"But it is no mystery, is it, that you an I can be friends? Can't you in some way recall that I am the one who last summer gave you quartered apples, and bread soaked in milk? You need not close the doors against me; I know you will realize that anew, when the weather grows warmer and you are more awake.

* * *

"You are in my garden now and I like to have you. But see this board on edge? You can't climb it, and there is one like it on each side of every bed. They are to keep you from spoiling a whole head of lettuce, or a whole tomato, when you are hungry. You bore into things, bad table manners men think, but I'll give you all the lettuce leaves and all the slices of tomato you can hold.

"There is deep, soft loam everywhere for your burrows; there is water in which you can soak when you please; and other tortoises will come along. There is no reason why you should not stay, and I hope you will. We were friends last summer; can't we be friends again?"

HELPING THE GREAT LAUREL

Near the city there was only one colony of the great laurel and that the sole representation of the plant for many miles. On a prominence of the rocky palisades of the river, a score of plants stood at the very brink, where quarrying operations from both sides threatened to engulf them. Their fine foliage in winter, and beautiful flowers in spring, had tempted visitors ignorant, perhaps, of their rarity and isolation, so that the older plants had been demolished. Some smaller shrubs and seedlings surviving, however, gave opportunity for rescue.

Ample balls of earth inclosing the roots were carefully dug, wrapped, and carried to a reservation where safety would be assured. There in soil pockets on the northern exposure of sheltering rocks they were reset the same day. Then, and at intervals for a few seasons, they were well watered, and mulched with partly decayed leaves from a thicket of their nearest relative of the region, the little laurel, until vigorous new growth proved that they were estabished and happy. From that time their luxuriant green leaves, and later in season, their numerous trusses of lovely flowers, gave all the thanks plants can give for help in time of need.

As soon as the strawberries reddened in my little patch, the woodthrushes came. Every bit of red was eaten and the berries could not ripen fast enough to satisfy the birds. They were lovely pilferers, though, in their spotted white vests and russet coats; and when they brought their tottery young and as if by right fed them my berries, in my patch right under my very nose, they could have had every one for all of me; and so in time they did.

It was much the same with the cherries when the robins and the catbirds found them, but no cherry is, in my eyes, worth one view of a perky robin on the lawn or one flash of a catbird flipping into a bush with a saucy *miaou*. In fact, the truth is, I would rather have the birds than the fruit any day. A few cents would buy as much fruit as I could raise, but nothing could buy the pleasure I had in seeing the birds, hearing their songs, and learning about their lives and ways.

A VIRGINIA FEEDING STATION

When new-fallen snow deeply blankets the earth and the air is still filled with swirling flakes, a well-kept feeding station has its greatest value not only to the birds, for sustenance, but also to its keeper, for beauty. In the midst of the storm come starlings in fluttering, scrambling crowds, so eager for food they must all eat at once. They take anything, but in the cold and snow like suet best. English sparrows, their equals in avidity, prefer seeds, although they try the suet so as not to miss anything that other birds seem to find good.

The visits of these birds are accentuated by the blustery weather and the regular patrons of the station — chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, jays, cardinals—come more often and stay longer. It is the unusual visitors, though, that most benefit from the emergency supply of food, and whose visits most gratify the owner of the station.

The chewink, lured from its thicket, finds broken grain, seeds and crumbs to its liking, but this bird must be enjoyed at the moment, for as soon as the snow recedes, back it will go to its secluded haunts. The Carolina wren finds the cold-hardened suet almost too much for its slender beak, but must dig away at it to live. Here a week of deep snow means death to Carolina wrens that cannot find emergency rations, while the pert little winter wren in some way still finds its natural food and very rarely pays any attention to a feeding station. Weatherbeaten, the fruit-eating mockingbird tentatively tries the suet, but has no taste

for it. Cut apples are just right, however, and when held by flat-headed nails or other device, are hollowed out to the skin. Sometimes soaked raisins will help a mocker through a stormy period or attract a flock of the silken-sleek cedarbirds. What beauties they are! Whether aristocrat or plebeian of the bird world, all guests are welcome and their coming of itself rewards hospitality—repays the keeper in full for all his care.

THE BIRD MAN

He lived on an island alone. He seemed a part of nature and he applied the golden rule. The mockingbirds nested in vines on the house. They were not disturbed by his comings and goings but seemed to regard him as part of their world. Their song was as much for him as for themselves.

The porch was never bare of crumbs or other tidbits and the cardinals and other finches came confidently. They hopped through the kitchen windows, also, even when the bird man was cooking, for he was ever gentle and there was always food.

The larger birds that by reason of size alone could hardly be so intimate, shared the confidence shown by their smaller brethren. Coots played in the water about his boat and herons sat in trees near the house. Away from there they might be shy and watchful, for all men are not kind. There the bird man was the whole human race and he was kind. The island seemed an earthly paradise.

"Would you like to see Betsy?"

"And who is Betsy?"

"Oh, you don't know about her, do you? Why! Betsy is our tame doe; she was here just a minute ago."

Opening the door, the hostess continued, talking now to Betsy, "Still here; like to have your head rubbed some more, and eat a few more apples? I know you need them now, for I see your two babies over there. Bring them all the way next time."

As strangers, we stayed in the house so as not to disturb this charming scene. Later, when our hostess returned, she explained, "Betsy first came last winter when the snow was so deep and laid so long. We fed her and gradually she grew tame so that she seemed to like to be petted. For a time she disappeared but she came back just a few days ago, as gentle as ever. She brought two fawns with her, but they are shy, and so far have kept in the shelter of the bushes. They will tame, too, I think, and we shall be glad to have them. I wish we could take care of all the deer in hard weather, or any other time, of course, when they need it."

Where are the little fishes that used to be here, and were not much afraid when the horses and cows put their noses in the trough? Little fishes, you were my friends in those long ago days. Where are you now?

Where is the big fish that lived in the spring? The deep, cold spring where we got all our drinking water. He too was not afraid for none of us ever harmed him.

But most I miss the calves and colts, and the dogs and cats with whom I played. The barns and sheds that sheltered them, are all gone. The place lives only in my memory. In reality it is dead and desolate.

The house has fallen into the cellar—that once cool, moist cellar where the crocks of milk and cream, the moulds of butter, and rows of good things in jars, were among the joys of childhood. Here is a fragment of the stair, the outside stair we climbed to the attic. There we sank deep into feather-beds, and slept so soundly we awoke only when pulled out and shaken.

There is a bit of the rocker in which the house mother knit after long hours of harder work. Oh, the toil that went into it all, the farm, the barns, the home. Now all seems wasted. The upset cupboards are empty, the ridge-pole is broken, the family is ended.

NOTES ON CONTENTS

As the title, "Vignettes", implies, these essays are pictures of experiences that remain a little more sharply drawn than others against the background of the years. The extent to which they are, or are not, biographical may be gleaned from the following remarks. All were written at Washington, D. C., September-December, 1936.

PAGE

PLAYMATES 1

The locality is the village of Jalapa, Indiana, where I was born; the experience personal; the date about 1888.

THE FIRST BIRD 2

Krinn's Woods, near the western part of Marion, Indiana, where I grew up; personal; about 1892. The "ground squirrel" is the chipmunk; the "first bird," the white-breasted nuthatch.

FRIENDLY TOADS 3

Seven Locks, Md., where toads were seen to make such fly-catching visits at the home of Mrs. Stewart, a good neighbor of the Washington Biologists' Field Club; about 1906; the rescue of a toad from some cats and a dog took place near Pennifield's Lock, Md., thirty years later.

THE TORTOISE IN THE GARDEN..... 4

Mrs. Stewart's garden, in other words, the same locality and period as the preceding; we usually had partially tamed tortoises, also, about the house on Plummers Island, home of the Club.

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Transplanting *Rhododendron maximum* from a spot near Chain Bridge, Va., to Plummers Island, Md., and nearby mainland; personal; June, 1908.

GROWING FRUIT FOR PLEASURE..... 6
Arlington County, Va.; personal; about 1918.

A VIRGINIA FEEDING STATION 7
Same locality and period as the preceding.

THE BIRD MAN 8
About a man whose name I do not recall, who lived on a marsh island near Brunswick, Ga.; June, 1923.

A TAME DOE 9
National Park headquarters, Mount Rainier, Washington; the doe tamed by the wife of one of the officials; 1934.

THE ABANDONED FARM 10
The farm between Marion and Jalapa, Indiana, once belonging to Elijah Bloomer, where I spent a few summers in adolescence, about 1895-1897, and found in the state described in 1934.

Trifles

With the Compliments of

WALDO LEE MCATEE

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ONE OF NATURE'S MARVELS

The grasp of man averages inches thirty,
Deem you the reason hid in murks?
Think; many a waist also is thirty,
How wondrous Nature are thy works!

HOW IT AFFECTED MARY

'Twas only a caterpillar
I placed on Mary's wrist,
But on crawling upward
The beastie did insist.

At this I put a question
As pink her cheeks did flee,
"Does it tickle your arm, my Mary?"
"No, it gets my goat," said she.

EYES OF HER

She was no so fair as to make ye stare,
Wi' specks and freckles here and there,
But oh! the eyes of her.

Tho trim o' form and neat o' clothes,
Ye could no miss that bunty nose,
But for the eyes of her.

Her hair so like a horse's tail,
To catch a lover it would fail,
But not those eyes of her.

Ye might think it time to go
Some moment when they did not show,
Those speaking eyes of her,

But let her lashes lift a bit
Bound and helpless ye would sit
Slave to those eyes of her.

If heart failed ye 'bout her nose
An instant when her lids did close
Hiding the eyes of her,

One look more into their deeps
It would shake ye with its leaps
All for the eyes of her.

Sure they were a wondrous pair,
Slaying swains without a care,
Gallant eyes of her.

THE HUNTRESS

How quick to note the stranger in the gates
And to appraise this windfall of the fates.
If he's approved she soon will act upon it
And 'spite him add a feather to her bonnet.

A STORMY SUNDAY MORNING

The clam'rous cocks impatient crow,
But hear yon rantin' blasties blow,
Come nestle in my arms, my jo!

I hear the hungry beasties low,
But din ye see the swirlin' snow?
Just cuddle closer, come, my jo!

See now the weak gray day doth show
The storm gusts whippin' to and fro,
Come snuggle to me, Bess, my jo!

What if the church-bell's callin' oh,
We're cozier here than there, I trow,
Let's clasp the tighter, Bessie, jo!

TO THE INSECT COLLECTOR

It pains me, my lad, to see you in town
When it's harvest time down on the farm;
It grieves me, my boy, that you're wasting
the hours
Now it's harvest time down on the farm.
And, my son, what a pity you're strolling
the city
Instead of your usual employ
Of picking rare bugs from the tops of the
flowers
In harvest time down on the farm.

COLOR SCHEME OF A PERFECT LADY

Her pumps and her hose
Are pale lavender mauve
And so is her nose.

Her coat of some weeks,
A magenta cerise,
Matches her cheeks.

Her scarf the wind flips,
A lurid vermillion,
Agrees with her lips.

Her neck 'neath its down:
Does she wash it, I wonder?
For it sure is nut brown.

THE OBSTACLE

I like her form,
Her manner warm.
I like her hair
And skin so fair.
I like her clothes,
Her cheeks of rose.
I would propose
But damn her nose.

NORTHEASTER

"When the wind is in the East
'Tis good for neither man nor beast."

S'long's the weather holds noreast,
Remember what ole Mother Goose says.
It'll keep a-rainin', sure's fate
Sometimes heavy,
Sometimes like whoever tends the pourin'
Fergits jest what he's doin'.
But don't ye think it's cause
He's running out o' worter.
Lan' sakes, No,
Fer in a minute
It'll be sloshing down agin
Like all gitout.
S'long's the weather holds noreast,
Best mind what Mother Goose says.

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Washington, D. C., August 20, 1914.

How It Affected Mary - - - - - - - 2
Washington, D. C., December 23, 1917.

Eyes of Her - - - - - - - - - - - 3
Bradentown, Fla., October 2-3, 1918. The eyes were seen behind a ticket office window in Savannah, Ga., September 25, 1918. To tell the truth, their surroundings were not unattractive. That thought providing the contrast essential to the composition came later.

The Huntress - - - - - - - - - - - 4
Bradentown, Fla., October 3, 1918. Prompted by a curious glance; written while waiting for supper.

A Stormy Sunday Morning - - - - - 5
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To the Insect Collector - - - - - - 6
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Color Scheme of a Perfect Lady - - 7
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The Obstacle - - - - - - - - - - 8
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Washington, D. C., April 16-17, 1933. While listening to the rain at night.

Slightly Pungent

With the
Compliments of
WALDO LEE McATEE

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DEC 21 1938

Seeing it costs from about $25 a day up to enjoy the sights of the supposedly public park we were inspecting, it seemed reasonable to assume that the visitors were representative of superior elements of our population. Realization that this was not true came suddenly like the awakening from a dream. As remarks floated back in the sight-seeing bus, their absurdity and inanity grew maddening. They inspired such musings as, "Are these people morons, moronic fools, or damn moronic fools?" It was a real pleasure to revolve these appellations in the mind in all of their permutations and combinations to determine which was most fitting. Our decision is given in the sequel.

The guide having called attention to a mountain bluebird, one of the bluest of blue creatures, an elderly dame fatuously remarked, "Oh yes, that reminds me of our canary. He's one of those talking canaries, you know, calls me 'Sweetheart' and 'Dearie', [here an arch titter] so cute ——."

Having read Zane Grey, the typical tourists expect to see bad men skipping about the canyon rims, and think nothing grows in the West but greasewood and sagebrush. Innocently asking a guide whether a plant they point out is sagebrush when it's cottonwood, or greasewood when it's juniper, are among the mildest of their follies.

When the guide gives the peculiarities of the local climate with such impressive detail as 100 inches of snow, they retort

with "Now back in Jersey, so and so happens," a comparison so inept as to occur to none but a moron. In the presence of unapproachable natural grandeur, they recall petty local lore *ad nauseam*. One wonders why they do not tell the guide (as well as unpaid listeners) the sign of the moon in which they cut their toenails.

They mistake erosional phenomena for volcanic, and volcanic for glacial, and ask whether any of the dinosaurs are still living in the canyon. They dote and drivel all the day, inspiring in us a vast and abiding sympathy for the hapless guides who must listen to them and still treat them as if they were intelligent and reasonable human beings.

Sinclair Lewis called them Babbitts, but our own auto-suggested term, moronic damn fools, seems more descriptive and infinitely more satisfying.

EXTRA PAPER!

The cry of "Extra! Extra Paper!" seems usually to come in what are sometimes curiously called the silent watches of the night. It is a disturbing, throbbing sound that arouses you to consciousness despite the depth of your slumber. An ululation, now dying away, again rising to a new crescendo, it seems to spread over the city like a wave impulse from the center of a pool, soon lapping on every shore.

It is an exciting cry like that of "Fire! Fire!," perhaps because its makers, by their running and shouting, are themselves excited. As it swiftly approaches, or breaks out in new centers, here, there, everywhere, it acquires a thrilling, a portentous significance. You feel that so impressive a demonstration must be connected with an important happening. What the event may be can never be learned from the cries, which though loud and all pervading, are unintelligible. "Extree! Extree! Read about! Ree ow! ow! ow!, Extray! Extray! Ray! ay! ay! ay!, Papo! Papo! oh! oh! oh! oh!" The shouts inspire but they do not inform, so you decide to get a paper.

Far and fast the sound travels but it is difficult to descry one of its makers. There!, one must be coming in the next block, but no, the sound fades away down a side street. Here one is coming through but howling like a madman, he seems bent on selling his papers somewhere beyond the city limits. The chance of actually contacting one of these emissaries seems small indeed. When one is heard on a course

that apparently will bring him by your door, you cannot descend in time to intercept his headlong flight.

If you cry "Hey! boy!" from the window, your call is lost in the general hullaballoo; it is a small sound drowning in a big one, producing no more effect than a raindrop falling into a lake.

You may make the trip down and up the stairs again and again, you may lean out the window at the risk of your neck and immortal soul, you may yell all you please, but the running and crying of "Extra!" does not halt. Then as suddenly as it arose the tumult and the shouting die away—and you have no paper.

Resignedly you conclude "Oh well, I'll see what it was all about in the morning edition." On examining the paper with care as you breakfast, you cannot for the life of you decide which item inspired all the commotion of the night before.

A PERFECT GENTLEMAN

The dictionary reveals nothing as to the meaning of this phrase and no wonder. A leading lady novelist applied it, in one of our most upright and decorous magazines, to a Western rancher I knew well. He was a he-man of a very rugged type and in the company of men, at least, profane, telling or relishing a risque story as well as anyone, and to all indications a good follower of Martin Luther's advice as to loving wine, woman, and song. Just what did the lady novelist mean?

A veteran of the Klondike gold rush, dining in the States a generation later, ran across a former pal; heedless of other diners, they went into a bear-hug and greeted each other in language appropriate to the time when they had been comrades. With advisable symbolism, the exchange was something like this: "Well, I'll be —— —— you —— —— old —— ——" said the one; "Well —— your hide, you lousy, horse-stealing old —— ——, I shore am glad to see you." In an interview, later, one, an American, said of the other, "He's an Italian count now, but that doesn't make a bit of difference, for he's a perfect gentleman."

Another perfect gentleman I personally know is half-stewed all the time. He is a fair sample of a whiskey-and-soda crowd whose entire life is one round of minor vices and whose oft-spoken criterion for the acceptance of new acquaintances is ability to behave like one of themselves, that is, like a perfect gentleman.

By this time the reader will have noted that the expression "a perfect gentleman," while intended to convey approval, may have a different meaning for every person using it. From the examples cited, it seems to be a phrase of no precise descriptive value and except from just the right source, hardly to be welcomed as applied to one's self.

To epitomize, we probably must admit that a shop girl or a social leader, a gold-digger or a grandma, a prissie or a push-over, each has her own idea as to what constitutes a perfect gentleman. Again it is quite likely that a preacher or a professor, a gangster or a gigolo, a pugilist or a pansy, would each have for the remark a highly individual implication.

AMATEUR FIREMEN

If you are a typical American citizen, some fine day a real estate agent will sell you a suburban home. Among advantages of the place, according to his optimistic point of view, may be that it is in the same block as a fire station. You will be well advised to tell him that you prefer any other block.

This advice comes from one who learned about amateur firemen by being in the same block. Rehearsals are a great joy to the volunteer fireman; they give excuse for much jangling of bells, both at the station house and on the speeding truck, the operation of which provides opportunity for ignoring all traffic regulations. At the first sound of the bell you must drop whatever you are doing, rush forth, and snatch your children from the path of the roaring, clanging machine. As it whizzes by, the firemen, despite having at that instant almost murdered your offspring, wave to you with unaffected friendliness and innocent joy; they are having a wonderful time.

The volunteer fireman would rather go to a fire than eat. In his zeal to save seconds he takes short cuts over your hedge and through your flower beds, wrecking everything. When on a call, his mission not only makes him ignore the ordinary amenities but changes him so that he, who otherwise seems an inoffensive and peaceful neighbor, is transformed into a being of quite a different sort. He is bitterly disappointed by a small fire; a little blaze in a chicken house or other outbuilding is the grief of his life.

The most enjoyable conflagration of all is one in a residence so distant that when the company arrives, all that can be done is to sit down and watch it burn. That is ideal!

When, perchance, the fireman arrives at an earlier stage, he seizes his favorite implement, or rather weapon—the axe. If the fire isn't going any too well, he at once chops some holes in the lower part of the structure, or knocks out a few windows, so as to get up a real good draft. If not too late to enter the place, the havoc he can wreak by a little axe play is marvelous. I could not make a better wish for my dearest enemy than that if his house caught fire he would receive the prompt assistance of a typical crew of volunteer firemen.

The favorite hour for the serious exercises of the amateur firemen is about 4 or 5 A. M., so that by the time the thoroughly awakened neighborhood settles down, everyone oversleeps and is late to work. This happened a few times too many for the peace of mind of a school teacher who roomed with us. She must have become a little vengeful, for one day she reported with apparent satisfaction the following incident at school. She had asked Tommy to correct the sentence, "Before any damage could be done, the fire was put out by the volunteer fire brigade." Tommy's correction was: "The fire was put out before any damage could be done by the volunteer fire brigade."

"Well," I agreed, "Tommy certainly knows his firemen."

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Tourists on Parade - - - - - - - 1

Conceived Grand Canyon, Arizona, June 9; written on train in Nevada, July 29, 1934.

Extra Paper! - - - - - - - - - 3

The inspiration is obvious; written at the scene, Washington, D. C., January 4-5, 1936.

A Perfect Gentleman - - - - - - 5

Washington, D. C., conceived about 1915, written November, 1936.

Amateur Firemen - - - - - - - 7

Based on experience in Maywood, Virginia; sketched there years ago; completed, Washington, D. C., January 30, 1938.

McAtee, Waldo Lee

Pamphlet
Collection

1. Poetry.

Somewhat Somber

With the Compliments of

WALDO LEE McATEE

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FOREWORD

POETS may seem, perhaps, too much preoccupied with death. The reason appears to be that the theme is highly emotional. Poetry's chief concern is with emotion, and death and its associations inspiring so great a share of our deeper feelings naturally loom large in poetry, which is but a reflection of human experience.

The writer dabbles a little in all sorts of writing and his readers need only recall his "Trifles" of 1937 to realize he is not "typed" and that the present collection of poems is no more an epitome of his reactions than are any of the previous and decidedly different presentations.

WHEN ALL ONE LOVED IS GONE

Friends of youth have heard the call;
College mates, I've farewelled all;
How hard it is this side the wall,
When friends one loved are gone.

I loved a woman, she is dead;
I loved another, love soon fled;
How hard it is to go ahead,
When hearts one loved are gone.

I loved my work, I'm on half-pay;
I loved my chores, but sons say nay;
How hard it is to pass a day
When tasks one loved are gone.

When friends and lovers are no more,
When usefulness at work is o'er,
It is not hard to leave this shore,
When all one loved is gone.

HEARTBREAK

We hardly knew the stranger youth
Ere he had passed away;
Yet what we knew we greatly loved
Far more than we could say.
We hardly knew that he was dead
Than did a maid appear,
Who gently claimed him as her own
All stark there on his bier.
We knew not whence she came, nor how,
But from that last sad hour
She drooped and faded in a day
Just like a broken flower.
What tie there was between those two
We guessed but never knew.
Oh! why does fate deny love's bliss
To a pair so leal and true?

TO A SINGING BIRD

You have not lived as long as I,
You will not live as long,
But still your spirit must be high,
To sing that merry song.

It is enough for your light heart,
That now the sky is blue,
The sun is high, I have my part,
But I'm not gay like you.

Is it because of man and bird,
You do not know that you must die?
So small a thing as that, gay bird,
Is that, is that the reason why?

MEMORIAL DAY

'Mid the serried white stones fluttering,
Thousands of red, white, and blue,
In the clear and bright light glowing
Tribute flowers of every hue.
For each fallen man a banner,
For each grave a poppy red,
Thus the nation e'er remembers
And reveres its honored dead.

["Americans are so sentimental."]

Sentimental, is that faulty?
When it means to have a heart
That can be as stern as tender,
That can play a manly part.
Sentimental, but we'll fight for
All the things they died to save,
And we pledge it every springtime
As we decorate each grave.

UNENDING YOUTH

Those who fell were young—
Young as they were
When last we clasped their hands,
Strong, bright-eyed youths,
Too precious
For the sacrifice they made.
Yet one great boon they earned,
The goal of the alchemists,
A dream of every man—
Unending youth.
They lost their lives
But life lost too
Its power to make them old.
Though we age on,
They never age;
Our boys who fell
Stay ever young.

EPHEMERAL

As man takes but a little time
To mingle with the clay,
So lay the flowers in the grass
And let them wilt away.

As man in yielding dust to dust
Halts little on the way,
So lay the flowers in the grass
To perish with the day.

IT WILL NOT MATTER THEN

Loving as you can,
Tender as you may,
Strew the flowers over him
Who was a friend one day.

With each friend there goes
Something of your heart,
And the remnant will not matter
When at last you too depart.

REFUGE OF THE COMPASSIONATE

He was a friend of humankind,
But every day
The treacheries of the politicians
And oppressions of the tyrants
Racked his soul.
Now he is gone
And though mankind is just the same,
He is in peace, he does not care,
Because he does not know.

He was a friend of nature,
But every day
The greed of the exploiters
And the blood lust of the killers
Blighted his hope.
Now he is gone
And though mankind is just the same,
He is in peace, he does not care,
Because he does not know.

Is that the only way to peace
For those like him?
Will life forever be so cruel
That to death we gladly yield?
That in the grave
We'll seek refuge
And though man remains the same,
We'll be in peace, we shall not care,
Because we shall not know?

A LONG TIME AGO

Sitting near the ruddy fire,
Waiting for the welcome supper,
Then it was we,
Now, it is I, alone;
Hearing the pot so busy bubbling,
Smelling the stew, its savor steaming,
Then it was we,
Now, it is I, alone;
Why these tears
For those dear dead years?
My mother was there,
My mother with me,
A long time ago.

EASE IN SONG

Let anger rise, let wrath prevail
Then no thought comes untainted.
Taut brain, set jaw, tense breast,
The days are worse than wasted.
In time, blest sleep dissolves the bar
That in the mind was forged
And some kind morn one sings again
Faltering, weak, and broken;
But oh! how better to sing again,
E'en though it be a sad song.
When melts the welded arc in brain
And clamped jaw relaxes,
When eases the tight and aching chest
And song returns unprompted;
How welcome as an end to pain,
E'en though it be a sad song.
When hatred, pride, and anger rule
And no thought can bring pleasure
What joy to murmur a song again,
E'en though it be a sad song.
Then for the heart's ease, sing and sing,
E'en though it be a sad song.

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Foreword - - - - - - - - - - 1

When All One Loved is Gone - - - 2

Washington, D. C., June 29, 30, 1913. Probably inspired by conversations with my working companion, teacher, and friend, Professor F. E. L. Beal, including the remark that, "When a man lives to be seventy he sees most of his friends pass away."

Heartbreak - - - - - - - - - 3

Conceived Washington, D. C., July 18, 1917; written Bradentown, Fla., October 5, 1918. The period of a few days spent in Bradentown waiting for a companion on a proposed field investigation was, for its length, the most productive in creative writing of any that I can recall.

To a Singing Bird - - - - - - - - 4

Inspired by a singing flock of bobolinks near Pohick, Va., May 8; written Washington, D. C., May 8, 9, and 12, 1938.

Memorial Day - - - - - - - - - 5

Washington, D. C., May 30, 1938. This and the following three poems were written after decorating the graves of fallen friends, in Arlington and Rock Creek Cemeteries.

Unending Youth - - - - - - - - 6

Note on "Memorial Day" applies. I had this thought in mind for years and finally got in the mood for wording it. The poem applies to all who made the gallant, though it now seems useless, sacrifice, but my inspiration in particular was memories of two fine boys —Lyman Case Ward (1890-1918) and Douglas Clifford Mabbott (1893-1918)—with whom I worked in the Division of Food Habits Research in the Biological Survey.

Ephemeral - - - - - - - - - - 7

Note on "Memorial Day" applies. To Maurice Crowther Hall (1881-1938) whose funeral I had attended the preceding May 3.

It Will Not Matter Then - - - - 8

Note on "Memorial Day" applies. To Charles Wallace Richmond (1868-1932).

Generous, genial, gentle friend; amiable, witty, regretted companion.

Refuge of the Compassionate - - - 9

Washington, D. C., June 5, 12, 1938. Thoughts long entertained, crystallized by the funeral of Maurice C. Hall to whom they well applied.

He had the philosophy proper to a scientist, rejecting all superstitions and all assumptions as to the unknown. For both his philosophy and his achievements he will be held in respected memory.

A Long Time Ago - - - - - - - 10

Lost River State Park, W. Va., September 8, 1938, where I lived much alone for a week; descriptive of a surge of emotion inspired by a bubbling pot.

Ease in Song - - - - - - - - - 11

Washington, D. C.; conceived November 9, 1938; first draft November 27, 1938; second, April 16, 1939. Reflects personal experience.

List of Christmas Booklets - - - - 14

LIST OF CHRISTMAS BOOKLETS

Year	Title	Number of Compositions Prose	Poetry
1920	Verses	....	10
1921	Morning Reveries	3	2
1922	Where We Used to Fish	3	....
1931	Through the Years	....	10
1934	A Few Tales	5	....
1935	Medley	....	10
1936	Vignettes	10	....
1937	Trifles	....	9
1938	Slightly Pungent	4	....
1939	Somewhat Somber	....	10

Pamphlet
collection

Departmental Natural History

With The Compliments Of

WALDO LEE McATEE

Misc. Nat. papers.

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THE NOCTURNALS AND THE DIURNALS

Like the animal kingdom, the group of government employes can be roughly divided into two classes according to the time of their greatest activity. Some are more active by day, others by night. Those who are widest awake after dark frequent the bowling alleys, pool-rooms, and theaters, or attend parties, receptions, dances, and the like.

Popular expressions relating to this nocturnal life comprise some very mixed metaphors. Those who habitually keep late hours are night-owls, but it is said they lead a butterfly existence, yet real butterflies are never active at night. More truly they are compared to moths fluttering around a flame, yet they are flames themselves, burning the candle at both ends. Piling metaphor on metaphor we must record that too much of this candle, owl, moth, and butterfly activity by night makes drones by day. If we could tuck into bed promptly at curfew, or cholorform nightly, some of these nocturnals, we would effect a conservation of energy that would soon show in their daytime activities, resulting in their transfer to the ranks of the diurnals, or workers, the industrious class upon which the proper functioning of the federal departments depends. Since the steady efforts of the diurnals are what keep the organization going, it follows that the nocturnals or drones are more or less parasitic upon their fellows.

RED-TAPE WORMS

Government bureaus and departments may be compared to the human organism. For instance

each has a directing head supposed to contain the brain. However, it is remarkable in how many cases this has no connection with the backbone of the organization. There are parts analogous to the limbs and extremities and of course also to the internal organs with their usual parasites. It is with the intestines that we have particularly to do in the present essay, as being afflicted with a dangerous ailment. They are chronically and in some cases totally obstructed by a superabundance of what is commonly known as red-tape. In this indigestible mass live and thrive the parasites known as red-tape worms. They have many characters in common with ordinary tapeworms, and particularly in this respect, that while they cannot live without a host to parasitize, the host is never better off than when free from them, and can contemplate with the liveliest satisfaction their utter extinction.

However, the red-tape worms, ensconced in a never-ending supply of their favorite pabulum, which forms a barrier protecting them from external dangers, are totally unaware of the host's sentiments respecting themselves. Thus safe in their comfortable retreats, they wax in conceit until they believe that they are the directing power of the organism. Emboldened, some of them make excursions from the intestines into other parts of the body, always carrying with them their favorite red-tape and invariably the result is serious illness of the part affected. If they near the brain, animation is suspended and if they reach it, death ensues.

Everyone is acquainted with federal bureaus or institutions that have red-tape worms in the cere-

bellum that paralyze their activities, and in some cases we suspect the parasites are very near the cerebrum or center of intelligence. Every organization has these pests and every reader can recall specimens of this numerous tribe.

LEAVE SICKNESS

Some animals den up for the winter, or hibernate, while others aestivate or intern themselves in their burrows to escape the hottest weather. Their habits are interesting but by no means so remarkable as those of a kind we have in the government departments that are sick just 30 days each year[1]. Their habit is indeed a phenomenal one. By what instinct they select days to be sick that are neither Sundays, holidays, nor among those devoted to annual leave is unknown. One is tempted to believe they are sick just when they want to be, but this is a paradox for who wants to be sick? All in all this is a famous mystery.

BIG BIRDS AND LITTLE BIRDS

Commensalism is a relationship between animals whereby both profit, but in which, nevertheless, one of the associated species is essentially dependent on the other. Apparently commensalism has not hitherto been reported among birds. Very interesting cases are to be noted, however, between the kind of birds commonly known as Big Birds (Genus Megornis) and the Toadies (Genus Toadius), both of which are fairly com-

[1] When this was written the allowance of sick leave was 30 days; now it is 15.

mon in the departmental roosts. Birds of the genus Megornis undeniably well advanced in the bird world, just as certainly are inordinately vain. This is their weak point and it is well exploited by the little birds of the genus Toadius. By adulation and by submissiveness the latter humble themselves to their overlords and by imitation flatter them exceedingly. This is most pleasing to the Big Birds and they shelter and protect the feeble little Toadies and contribute materially to their welfare. The Toadies further derive from the Big Birds that part of their learning of which they are most proud, and to a large degree, their manners and habits. Thus within the narrow limits of their adaptiveness, they resemble the Big Birds. However, they can always be recognized by their timidity except in the presence of their protectors, their quick and often radical changes of habit, in response to whims actual or inferred of their masters, as well as by their general inferiority to normal birds. Practically every Big Bird has one or more Toadies in attendance so that we must conclude that even in the bird world every Johnson has his Boswell.

THE FOOLISH FISH AND THE WISE FISH

The species known as the Chief Fish shows remarkable diversity in habits probably connected with the relatively undeveloped state of this species in evolution. However, in this case as in others, inexorable fate steps in to remove a fish that varies too far from the habits that have been found best for its kind. Upon occasion it has been observed that certain Chief Fishes have chosen to bask contentedly in shallow waters accompanied

only by jellyfishes. The latter offer no obstacles to the Chief Fish doing exactly as it pleases, but on the other hand they have no mode of defense useful to their master. They have only certain stinging cells with which they irritate but do not injure other organisms in their environment. So plastic and feeble are they that any storm or disturbance drives them to cover, leaving the Chief Fish alone and unsupported. Such is the case with the foolish fish.

On the other hand, there are Chief Fishes which appreciate that permanent welfare can be assured only by encouraging the presence of others even if smaller individuals of their own kind. These companions are adapted to the same mode of life, brave any depth, ride out every storm. Foes, from whatever direction they come, find determined defenders of the school. A Chief Fish so attended is supported and protected even in its age, and well deserves to be called a wise fish.

THE ANT THAT HAD SLAVES AND THE ANT THAT HAD BRETHREN

It is well known that certain kinds of ants are habitual slave makers and so dependent are they upon their slaves that deprived of them they perish. Other ants have the practice of slave-making developed to a lesser degree and it is with a family of these ants that this tale has to do. Two brothers in this family differed greatly in characteristics; one of them was a hard and earnest worker, sharing all the tasks, the joys, and the sorrows of the family, while the other felt himself rather too distinguished for so prosaic a career.

This ant announced to his brother that he was done with what he termed the vulgar details of life in the home colony and was going to surround himself with slaves, and lead a life of ease. The brother advised against this course but to no avail; the would-be slave-maker got his slaves. Awed by his power of jaw, the slave ants coddled and flattered him to his heart's content. They worked industriously enough and tried to care for the master-ant, but their style of life was not his; in any emergency they would do what was proper for their kind, but what might be hurtful to their ruler. The poor things were not to blame for this; they knew no better. In time the master-ant lost all power of doing things for himself, and he was most unhappy; the food did not agree with him, the nest was not properly repaired and defended, the slaves seemed unable to do anything right. As age and weakness overtook him, he realized that he had put his faith in a broken reed and repented his folly, but it was too late. His house collapsed, his line perished with him, and the slaves dispersed.

The brother ant which had chosen to associate with his own kind led the satisfying, normal life of one who lives and strives with worthy companions for worthy ends. Their home was serene and efficient, the various duties were in the care of ants which understood them and which had a real interest in the common welfare. The colony naturally thrived and grew, becoming one of the greatest in the region. The wise elder ant passed his latter days in great content, surrounded by those he had helped and loved and who now revered and respected him. His works and his

fame were great for his kind, but his greatest comfort (and later his noblest monument) was the brotherly love of his associates, faithful to the end.

A DOG'S LIFE

Following every motion with his fine glowing eyes, the dog seems almost to divine his master's fleeting moods. If the master smiles, Towser goes into ecstacies, if he frowns, the dog's tail droops in woe. In fair weather, Towser is a joyous, untiring companion, in foul, a staunch and enduring ally. Should his master be injured, his canine friend will seek help or stand guard until it arrives, should he be attacked the dog will oppose a host of enemies, and sell his own life if need be in the struggle. Should the master perish, the devoted dog will starve beside his body or on his grave; faithful in life, he is faithful unto the end.

So runs the typical eulogy of a dog, but as in most eulogies, important facts are suppressed. As a rule what the dog deserves is not laudation but condemnation as a very dunce, considering the undeserving object of his extravagant regard. In a hundred cases to one, the man will not consider the dog's feelings or wellbeing. On the contrary, he will bedevil him with harsh words, and cuff or kick him, as the spirit moves. The dog can sleep in the cold and storm though the man is snugly housed. If there is scarcity of food, the dog can go without and if starvation looms, sooner or later, he will be eaten. In short, the creature called man, to which the dog plays the part of a noble, if misguided, friend, will in the

long run so act as to define anew the fell significance of the term "a dog's life."

In applying the lesson of a dog's life to the government service, we may recall that the prevalent understanding of the term "cooperate" is "be a good dog" and that the very popular expression "play the game" really means, "Lie down, Towser."

THE HOARDERS

Like the locust of ancient story which went in and got another grain of corn, a certain woodpecker of our western states digs a hole and places an acorn therein, then prepares another hole and stores another acorn. Its chief object in life seems to be the pigeon-holing of acorns. It is said never to use more than a small proportion of the nuts it stores but, nevertheless, fiercely drives away intruders which would put to use part of its precious hoard. In this bird and its habits we have a likeness to certain librarians and their ways. Their idea of the proper conduct of a library is to place the books on the shelves and keep them there. The would-be borrower is cajoled and persuaded, pleaded with and dissuaded; it is so important that the books remain where they are. Coupled with this idea is another very peculiar one, namely, that if a book wanted is not in the library at the time, and the fact is duly reported, the incident is closed. Evidently it is expected that the one wanting to consult a book should be just as well satisfied by the report, "not on shelf," or the like, as if he actually obtained the book. Thus the woodpecker hoarder obstructing the use of its ample stores by others is closely imitated.

THE EDITOR WRENS

Referring to the federal employes as if they were members of the feathered kingdom we find among them, not more numerous perhaps than wrens are in comparison to other birds, but still far too numerous, the race of Editor Wrens. In contrast to other wrens these birds have no particular economic value. Like the house wren, however, these editor wrens take a great interest in meddling with the nests (manuscripts) of other birds. Again like the familiar house wren, their own nests are made of coarse materials, some too long, others too short, of sticks, nails, wire, and such hodge-podge that cannot possibly be compounded into a harmonious whole. It is not surprising, therefore, that in altering the nests of other birds, as they love to do, they often remove a smooth and well-adapted part and replace it with a substitute that is stiff and utterly foreign to the remainder of the structure. Their own nests being of the most ramshackle description, these wrens are wholly unable to appreciate the niceties of construction, the symmetry, the careful fitting of part to part, and their mutual dependence, that characterize the nests of their betters in the bird world. The greatest beauties of other birds' nests, that is the eggs, are either thrown out entirely or pierced, broken, and scattered about, defiling the whole structure.

The editor wrens, however, take great satisfaction in their destructive work and after thoroughly wrecking the nest of another bird, sing over the remains. Concealing their part in the demolition of the structure, they represent the destroyed nest

as the genuine work of another bird, in the hope of establishing the editor wren style of architecture as the model for the whole bird world. In this hope, however, they are doomed to disappointment for every species of bird will continue to build its nest after the model that time and events have proved to be best adapted to the purpose. In view of the life habits of the Editor Wrens, it seems almost the dispensation of omniscience that their song should sound like the words, "I'm useless, useless, useless."[2]

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[2] Since writing this, the author himself has done much editing, but he still deplores unnecessary revision of manuscripts.

THE MIGRANTS

Many government representatives wander more or less in the performance of their work, but we have relatively few true migrants, that is those spending the summer in the north and the winters in the south. Naturally enough these typical migrants are restricted almost entirely to the high flyers. Those called chiefs frequently find that their presence is required in the Adirondacks, Glacier National Park, or Alaska in the summer and at Key West, Brownsville, or San Diego in the winter. More ambitious excursions are made by the legislative type, such distant places as the Canal Zone, and even the Hawaiian or Philippine Islands, being the goal of their cold weather trips. The following verses, closely resembling in style and sentiment Bryant's lines, "To A Waterfowl," are dedicated to these high flyers.

Oh far, far from the city,
  How pleasant 'tis to go,
From snow to seek the tropics
  And from heat the Eskimo.
So if you like to junket
  And sport throughout the land,
All bills the U. S. footing,
  Come join our classy band.

NOTES ON CONTENTS

So far as notes on the manuscripts reveal, these parables, with the exception of "A Dog's Life" (March 12, 1924), were written in the winters of 1920 and 1921. They may now be released, therefore, with the assurance that they do not recognizably portray any individuals. The foibles they touch upon, however, are not lacking in the present, nor will they be unrepresented in any future, generation, as they are part of human nature. Occasionally it is salutary to take a good look at ourselves and the results from this scanning, the writer trusts will include some smiles or even chuckles. Fun is an antidote for foibles and in that spirit the Departmental Natural History is offered.

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